

**LALSA**



SCHOOL OF LAW

**Seton Hall  
University**

LATIN AMERICAN LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION

**30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION  
&  
ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP  
AWARDS BANQUET**

*"30 Years of Service at Seton Hall Law"*

**THURSDAY  
MARCH 20, 2003**



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The Latin American Law Student Association (**LALSA**) at Seton Hall Law School is a nonprofit organization committed to the following goals:

1. Fostering individual achievement.
2. Providing necessary services to the law school community.
3. Addressing legal issues of the minority community.

**LALSA** was first established in the 1972-73 academic year to facilitate the adjustment and integration of Latino students into the law school community. One of our principal roles has been to identify the academic, financial, and social needs of the Latino students at Seton Hall Law. We have hosted various forums on academic support, professional development, and minority representation in the legal community. In addition, our members have established strong ties with local attorneys, NJHBA, PRBA, HNBA, DBA and other Bar Associations through the efforts of our **LALSA** networking community.

Our mission is to provide academic, professional and social support for all students. **LALSA** achieves these goals by recognizing the achievements of Latino students and alum, so that lessons may be learned, mentorship relationships created, and friendships established among the current **LALSA** members. Additionally, **LALSA** serves to educate the entire Seton Hall University Law School on the benefits of diversity and creates awareness of the challenges that Latino communities currently face.

STUDENTS OF ALL ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS ARE WELCOME  
AND ARE CURRENTLY MEMBERS OF **LALSA**



EXECUTIVE BOARD - 2002 / 2003

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REMARKS FROM LALSA PRESIDENT  
MASIEL VALENTIN-CRUZ

Every task undertaken in our lives is an adventure, a journey unto itself. I am glad to say that, during my journey as president of LALSA, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by dedicated, hard working individuals and loyal friends. These friends not only helped me scale the rocky terrain, but have caught me when I fell and gave me renewed energy to continue to lead our organization to new levels.

This past year was one of our most successful yet. We've continued to build strong ties with our alumni and bar associations such as PRBA, DBA & HBA. We've been present in the national scene by sponsoring members to attend the HNBA Annual Convention. We've taken steps towards uniting Latino law students by collaborating with ALALS at Rutgers Newark & ALIANZA at Rutgers Camden, as well as participating at the LALSA Roundtables sponsored by the PRBA in New York State. We've also strengthened our presence at Seton Hall Law School through academic support & career-oriented programs, thereby reaffirming our reputation as one of the schools most established and active student organizations.

A leader is only as good as the people she leads. This year's accomplishments are the product of the enthusiasm and hard work of many good friends. First & foremost, I would like to thank Jorge de Armas who has been my right hand for the past year. As we say in Spanish "Cuentas claras conservan amistades", Jorge saw to this. To Zoila, thank you for being my rock of Gibraltar, and the big sister to all our LLs. To Dorhee & Jamil, thank you for giving up your weekends for the greater good. To Ingrid, Zoe & Bernice, without you our Clerkship Series would not have been a reality. An finally, to Maida & Franz, thank you for your time and efforts in procuring sponsors for this banquet. There are a few students who were not on our e-board that deserve equal recognition: Minnette, Aleida, Adriana & Michelle - Thank you from the bottom of my heart! Likewise, there are alumni and professionals that deserve recognition (too many to name but I'll give it a try). Pedro, thanks for being present at our events. Jay, your presence was always felt. Mary Lou, thanks for graciously accepting to spearhead the Affirmative Action response on behalf of LALSA. Special thanks to Ramon de la Cruz, Carol Dominguez & Jason Otaño for keeping us in the loop! And last, but definitely not least, Ralph - your willingness to help never ceases to amaze me.



## PROGRAM OF THE EVENING

WELCOME .....	Dean Patrick Hobbs
	Dean of Seton Hall University School of Law
INVOCATION .....	Rev. Nicholas S. Gengaro
HONORING .....	Hon. Amikkar Velez-Lopez
	Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award
	Presented by Masiel Valentin-Cruz
HONORING .....	Louis Acevedo, Esq.
	Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award
	Presented by Prof. Wilfredo Caraballo
HONORING .....	Ileana J. Montes-Guadagnino
	Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award
	Presented by Katheline Boozong
RECOGNITION .....	Graduating LALSA Members
	Presented by Ingrid Echeverria and Franz Cobos
RECOGNITION .....	Contributing Administration, Faculty and Professionals
	Presented by Bernice Toledo and Maida Perez
INTERMISSION .....	Performance by Ballet Hispanico
	Sponsored by LALSA Alumnus, Joseph Perez-Maltes, Esq., Class of '02; Melanie J. Perez,
	Rutgers Law School 1L, & Seton Hall Alumni George L. Caceres, Esq., & Vivian Sanks-King,
	Class of '85 - Presented by Jorge DeArmas
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS .....	Presented by Prof. Solangel Maldonado
RALPH TRUJILLO SCHOLARSHIP .....	Presented by Ralph Trujillo
	Presented by Zoila Casanova
INCUMBENT PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS .....	Masiel Valentin-Cruz
INCOMING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS .....	Jairo Cano



LALSA would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous contributions to our organization. Your continued support has enabled us to reach our goals of fostering achievement, providing services to the law school community & addressing legal issues that affect minorities. Hopefully, LALSA will be able to continue this labor for the next thirty years to come. Thank you for everything!

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A stylized banner with a feather quill. The banner is rectangular with rounded corners and a thick black border. It has a slight 3D effect with a shadow on the right side. At the top, several short lines radiate upwards, suggesting a light or a celebratory burst. On the right side, a large feather quill is positioned vertically, with its tip pointing downwards and resting on a small, dark, rectangular base. The quill has detailed barbs and a central rachis. The text is centered within the banner.

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BAR REVIEW





## Honorable Amilkar Velez-Lopez

### BIOGRAPHY

#### *Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award*

The Hon. Amilkar Velez-Lopez was born in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, son of the late Miguel S. Velez & America Velez.

He studied in Adjuntas and New York. In high school, he was a founding member of the Borinquen ASPIRA Society of George Washington High School in New York City. He received his bachelor's degree in Sociology and Psychology with honors from the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico in 1968. As a student in Puerto Rico he was elected three times to student government and was president of both, the Sociology Club and the Senior Class of 1968. He then settled in Paterson, New Jersey and went on to complete his Master's degree in Social Work at Columbia University. While at Columbia he helped to found the Puerto Rican Coalition for Progress & The Puerto Rican Professional Association, and was twice elected to student government. He was an active member of the Puerto Rican Student Caucus of CUSSW and an Executive Board Member. He was also awarded the Federal Child Welfare Study Grant.

Upon graduation he moved to Newark, New Jersey. He graduated cum laude from Seton Hall Law School in 1979. At commencement, he received the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Award for Excellence. As a resident of the city of Newark, he helped to found the Borinquen Lions Club, The Hispanic Bar Association, The C.U.R.A. Drug Rehabilitation Program, P.R.E.A. and La Casa de Don Pedro, Inc.

Judge Velez-Lopez has received many awards throughout his career. He was the first nongovernmental person to receive the "Bandera de la Hispanidad". He has received many recognitions by the Hon. Sharpe James and Newark City Council as a Distinguished Citizen.

In the year 2000, he was appointed to the Newark Municipal Court and became a full-time judge in May 2002. Throughout his career, Judge Velez-Lopez has been a role model for the Hispanic Community and a distinguished community activist.

His community involvements include: sitting on the Board of Aspira, Inc. of N.J.; participating as panelist and analyst on various programs on Channel 41, Channel 47, Radio WADO, WJIT, WBGO; sitting on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Red Cross Chapter, New Jersey. He was co-owner and a contributing writer of the El Observador Newspaper. He also was chosen as "Man of the Year" by the Hon. Mildred Crump Association. Most recently Judge Velez-Lopez received the "Galardon de los Tres Proceres Antillanos" by the To Save Latin America Foundation.

An avid pool and domino player, Judge Velez-Lopez lists playing one of the Three Kings (Melchor) and distributing Christmas gifts to over 3,000 children as one of his most enjoyable activities over the last 10 years.



## Louis Acevedo, Esq.

### BIOGRAPHY

#### *Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award*

Louis Acevedo was born in the South Bronx, New York City and raised in an extended family household. In high school he was awarded seven awards and medals for his leadership as student body president.

After graduating from high school, he attended Lehman College for two semesters. He then enlisted in the United States Army, from where he received an Honorable Discharge. Upon being discharged from the military, he continued his undergraduate studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where he received his B.A. in Psychology (Deviant Behavior and Social Control).

After attaining his B.A., Louis accepted employment as a supervising teacher in an alternative school program and eleven months later accepted a position with the Office of New York State Senator Israel Ruiz as a Tenant Relations Specialist. Six months later, he embarked on his full-time law school studies at Seton Hall University School of Law. In his second semester at Seton Hall, Louis started working in the Essex-Newark Legal Services Clinic as an interpreter/translator and became involved in S.A.L.S.A. (Today known as L.A.L.S.A.) He was selected as the first recipient of the Ricardo Esquivel Scholarship and in the same year was the recipient of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund Scholarship. In his third and fourth semesters, he was accepted as a Legal Intern in the Essex-Newark Legal Services Clinic, where he represented clients on matrimonial landlord/tenant and public entitlement matters, and in his last year was selected by the clinic's faculty to serve as the Student Director of the Clinic. That year, he was awarded the New Jersey Hispanic Bar Association Scholarship Award and was elected as President of S.A.L.S.A. At graduation, Louis received the Seton Hall Clinic Program Student Director Award for his excellence in leadership and commitment to the mission of the clinic.

After attaining his J.D. in 1985, Louis passed both the New York and New Jersey States Bar Examinations, the same year he started a judicial clerkship with the Honorable June Strelecki, J.S.C., who was the Family Court Presiding Judge. After his judicial clerkship, he was hired by the Office of the Public Defender in Essex County as an Assistant Deputy Public Defender. In 1988, he accepted a position with the New York City Police Department's Advocate Office. In July of 1990, New Jersey State Public Advocate Wilfredo Caraballo appointed Louis to serve as a First Assistant Deputy Public Defender in the Passaic County Regional Office of the Public Defender, making him the first Latino to ever hold a managing attorney position in that regional office; the same year he accepted an offer by Seton Hall Law School as an Adjunct Professor.

In 1993, New Jersey State Public Advocate Zulima Farber appointed Louis as the first Latino ever in the history of the Office of the Public Defender of the State of New Jersey to serve as a Deputy Public Defender in charge of a trial regional office.

He has devoted his life to public service and would tell you that fame and money is no substitution for the gratification and emotional compensation that he receives by helping those in need; especially when his efforts yield just results.



## Ileana J. Montes-Guadagnino

### BIOGRAPHY

#### *Recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award*

Ileana Montes currently serves as the Deputy Director for the Division on Women and as the Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at the Department of Community Affairs.

In her dual role, Ms. Montes advocates, promotes and supports the improvement of the status of women and ensures that all DCA employees are afforded the protections of the Civil Rights Act and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination.

Born in 1971 in Bogotá, Colombia, Ms. Montes came to the United States with the dream to learn English and explore new opportunities and moved in with an aunt in Easton, Pennsylvania. In 1989, Ms. Montes was one of a handful of Hispanics admitted at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, where she became the President of both the International Student Organization and the Latin American Students Association. After obtaining her undergraduate degree, cum laude, in 1993, Ms. Montes attended Seton Hall University School of Law and earned a JD degree. While at Seton Hall she was elected President of L.A.L.S.A.

Ms. Montes began her legal career working with Linares & Coviello P.C., Brown & Brown, LLP and the Law Office of Antonio Martinez. As an attorney she also obtained extensive experience as the law clerk for Honorable Judge Hector Velasquez and as an associate attorney for Garces and Grabler P.C. Subsequently Ms. Montes owned and managed her own law firm where she practiced various types of law, such as, divorce and family matters, estate law, civil litigation, workers compensation, real estate and landlord tenant law.

As active member of the community, Ms. Montes currently serves on numerous professional organizations and committees, including the Latino Leadership Alliance, the National Hispanic Bar Association, the Girl Scout Council of Greater Essex and Hudson Counties, the Gender Equity Advisory Committee, the Contract Compliance & Equal Employment Opportunity in Public Contracts Committee and Governor James E. McGreevey's Disparity Study Commission. Ms. Montes is a former President of the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey and also served on the NJ Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns, the NJ Supreme Court Committee on Municipal Courts, and as co-chair of Governor McGreevey's Transition Team for the Department of State.

Ms. Montes has been honored by numerous Hispanic organizations and has received several congressional awards in recognition of her outstanding and invaluable service to the community. Finally, Ms. Montes is married to Peter J. Guadagnino, Esq., a Villanova University School of Law, Class of 1994 graduate and former Deputy Chief Assistant Prosecutor in Kings County, New York.

# Thinking Ahead.

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LALSA would like to thank the following professionals, faculty members and faculty advisors who have attended our meetings throughout the year in order to share experiences, advice, and wisdom with our members. Their gracious time commitment and dedication has contributed to the success of the organization. With sincerest of hearts, we thank you!

Honorable Jose L. Linares  
Honorable Miguel de la Carrera  
Honorable Patricia Talbert  
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Congratulations to the following graduating LALSA members:

Zoila Casanova  
Maria L. Alvarez  
Ingrid Echeverrie  
Hasan Ibrahim  
Masiel Valentin-Cruz  
Jorge de Armas  
Franz Cobos  
Andy Camacho  
Deborah Cipollone  
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